THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) to (c) There is a constant need for technological upgradation of equipment being used by GSI and as such, upgradation of equipment and machines is always an ongoing activity. Currently, this is being done under Plan schemes funded from the budget and also augmented by Aid routed through the budget.

Marble Mining in Rajasthan

†1465. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of Marble mines in the country every year and what is the share of Rajasthan; and

(b) the action being taken by Government to promote Marble mining in Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) Marble being a minor mineral its regulation and developments is monitored by the State Governments. As such, information regarding production of marble is available with the respective State Governments. On an average India's annual production of marble is reported to be around 37 lakh tonnes. The Government of Rajasthan has reported that during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99, 31.14 lakh tonnes, 34.41 lakh tonnes and 35.74 lakh tonnes respectively of marble were produced in the State.

(b) Marble being a minor mineral no action is being taken by the Central Government to promote marble mining in Rajasthan. However, the State Government of Rajasthan has informed that a "Marble Policy" was announced by them in 1944 for development of marble in the State which has resulted in the increase in production of marble from around 20 lakh tonnes to 35 lakh tonnes in a period of 5 years.

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.